

The Courier

Findlay, Ohio

**MORE MISSING
KIDS IN OHIO | A3**

**RAMS BASEBALL REACHES
DISTRICT FINAL | B1**

New FHS principal named

Findlay High School will have a new head principal next school year.

Findlay City Schools Board of Education is expected to hire Meg Simon, principal of Glenwood Middle School, as the high school's new head principal at its regular meeting in June. The district announced the decision Thursday evening.

Simon is in her third year as principal at Glenwood Middle School. In all, she has worked 12 years in

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Simon

Manhunt for a murderer

Prison escapee still at-large

By ANGELA LAROSA
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A manhunt for a killer is still underway four days after the convict escaped from a state prison Monday.

Bradley Gillespie, 50, was serving time at the Allen-Oakwood Correctional Facility in Lima for a double murder in 2016. He, and James Lee, 47, escaped from the prison together.

"We are working diligently to locate Bradley Gillespie," Henderson, Kentucky police Chief Sean McKinney said during a news conference Wednesday evening.

Gillespie and Lee, who was convicted of breaking and entering, were located in Henderson early Wednesday morning — approximately 43 hours after the men were last seen on prison surveillance video. Both suspects were seen

together in a stolen vehicle, which they crashed during a police chase. The men tried to flee on foot — Lee was caught but Gillespie was still loose Thursday afternoon.

Authorities found one of Gillespie's shoes two streets from where the stolen vehicle crashed. "The shoe was in an area where we believe was out of place," McKinney said. "It gave us a direction to conduct our search. It had no reason to be where it was."

Lee is at the Henderson County Detention Center, McKinney said. He was treated and released from the hospital after the car crash. He's been questioned, but wasn't very helpful.

McKinney said it's hard to put a radius on where Gillespie could be, but a general area is the northwest side of Henderson. Henderson is situated along a river separating Indiana and Kentucky, a roughly 5½-hour drive from Allen-Oakwood Correctional.

Eleven agencies have assisted the Henderson Police Department



Gillespie



Photo provided

HENDERSON, Kentucky police Chief Sean McKinney (far left) updated the public of the prison escapee from Ohio during a news conference Wednesday evening.

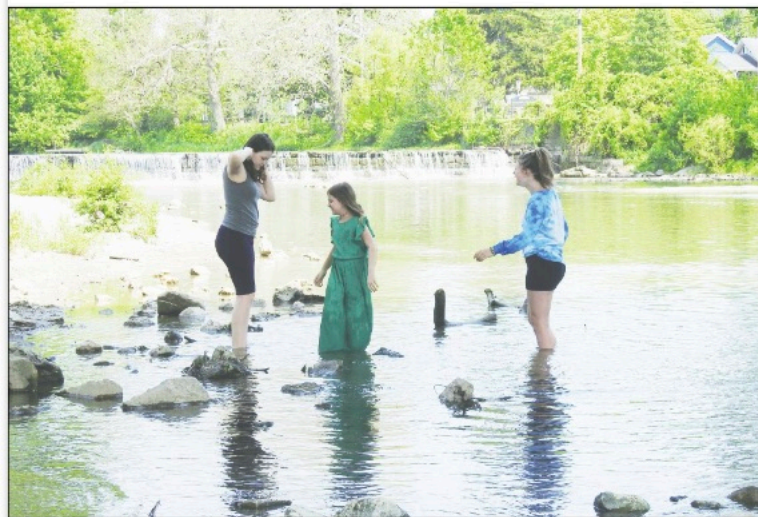
in searching the area, including agencies from Ohio, Indiana, Henderson County and the state of Kentucky, and the U.S. Marshal Service and Coast Guard, via water vessels, drones, helicopters and police canines.

And after 72 hours — over 24 in Kentucky alone — there still has not been any confirmed sightings of Gillespie.

McKinney said he believes Gillespie is hiding during daylight hours but will make moves for shelter, food and water during the night. He said there is no evidence Gillespie has left the Henderson area.

"We are going to be here all night long," McKinney said. "We're working through the nights. This is a manhunt we will not stop until he's caught."

Historic dam to be improved, not removed



DENISE GRANT / The Courier

SISTERS, FROM LEFT, Adeline Wittler, 11, Josephine Wittler, 8, and Teagan Wittler, 14, are pictured here wading in the Blanchard River at Findlay's Riverside Park. A project to improve the river at the park is expected to keep the historic dam intact.

Project will include 'fish bypass'

By DENISE GRANT
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Improvements to the Blanchard River at Findlay's Riverside Park, 231 McManness Ave., can be done without removing the park's historic dam.

Lauren Sandhu, coordinator for the Blanchard River Watershed Partnership, said updates to the dam, including a "fish bypass," can be done without removing it. The bypass can be constructed to circle around the side of the dam, and updates to eliminate sediment build-up and to make the dam safer can be done while leaving the dam intact. The bypass will allow fish to move up and down the river, past the dam.

Sandhu updated Findlay

City Council on the project's progress at its regular meeting on May 16.

The project will include dredging the river above the dam and removing about 40,000 cubic yards of sediment. The cleanup will improve recreational access to the river and a pool area within the old reservoir, located just upstream of the dam. The project is expected to be completed in 2026.

Design work is still ongoing, but Sandhu said the fish bypass will be constructed along East Main Cross Street near the dam, and may impact the overlook area parking lot and a trail that runs parallel with the street.

Construction will cost about \$3.1 million dollars. The BRWP is seeking a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to pay for the work. NOAA is offering grants to projects that restore fish passages in the

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U.S. HOUSE

Latta's fentanyl bill wins big

By LOU WILIN
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Legislation led by U.S. Rep. Bob Latta and a Virginia lawmaker to fight the surge in fentanyl deaths was approved by the U.S. House Thursday by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote.

The bill would make permanent fentanyl's classification as a Schedule 1 drug — meaning it has no accepted medical use and involves a high risk of abuse — alongside heroin, LSD, ecstasy and others. It would strengthen law enforcement's ability to prosecute fentanyl traffickers, said U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith, R-Virginia. The bill now heads

to the Senate for passage. It is supported by the Biden administration.

Fentanyl is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. Just a few milligrams, an amount small enough to fit inside the ear of Lincoln on a penny, can be lethal. Illicit fentanyl substances killed over 5,000 Ohioans and 70,000 Americans in 2021.

"In 2021, 77% of teen deaths were attributed to an illicit fentanyl poisoning and it is now the No. 1 cause of death in adults 18 to 49 (years old)," said Latta, R-Bowling Green, in a speech on the House floor. "This isn't about criminal justice reform. This is about justice for the victims of fentanyl poi-

soning. Cartels are killing our citizens for 10 cents ... That's how much it costs to make a pill in Mexico that's fentanyl-laced."

If fentanyl's classification as a Schedule 1 drug were to expire, "drug traffickers would be given the green light to push deadlier drugs, law enforcement would lose authority to seize these deadly narcotics and Americans will continue to die," Latta said.

"I am pleased the House has voted in favor of my critical legislation with Congressman Latta to permanently schedule deadly fentanyl (substances), strengthening law enforcement's ability to prosecute fentanyl traffickers," said Griffith, R-Virginia.



Latta

LIBERTY-BENTON

S.O.S. advisor recognized by Air Force

For the club's work supporting soldiers

By ANGELA LAROSA
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U.S. Air Force recruiters recognized Liberty-Benton's Support Our Soldiers club coordinator Mychelle Dukes for her outstanding work in the school and community Thursday morning.

"We really appreciate you for everything you've done. Not only for the Air Force, but for the (Department of Defense)," Lt. Col. Quoc Vo said at a ceremony at the school.



ANGELA LAROSA / The Courier

AIR FORCE Lt. Col. Quoc Vo, left, presented Mychelle Dukes an award for outstanding work coordinating Liberty-Benton's Support Our Soldiers group.

Dukes, library aide and S.O.S. club coordinator, received the top award from the U.S. Air Force Recruiting Service, presented to her by Vo, Staff Sgt. Mark Harrison, Master Sgt. Leon

Huren and Chief Master Sgt. Sean Murphy.

Dukes helps students plan events and brings people in to talk about the military for students in the

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